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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,  
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN  
USAID/ANE/MEA  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH  
PARIS FOR O'FRIEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR JO](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

#### Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, July 17, focuses on the convening of the newly-elected Jordanian parliament in its "extraordinary session" held July 16. Reports highlight the "hotly contested" election of Saad Hayel Srouf as Speaker of the Lower House with a majority of 65 votes, out of 110 total. Other lead stories focus on Iraq, highlighting further attacks against U.S. soldiers. Front-page stories also report that Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to meet President Bush in Washington D.C. on July 25.

#### Editorial Commentary

-- "Iraq first"

Daily columnist Urayb Rintawi writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (07/17): "There is a large gap that is hard to bridge between the political and intellectual trends in Iraq and the Arab world.. Representatives of the prevailing political tendencies in Iraq are meeting with Bremer today as part of the interim governing council to discuss the future of the country and its people, without fear of being labeled as agents or servants of the American master, and even without relevance to what the Arab media calls 'Iraqi resistance operations,' but which these Iraqis view as sabotage. On the other hand, the trend in the Arab world outside Iraq is to view what is going on in Iraq as part of a long-term occupation. Thus, the council is seen as a dirty game to decorate the ugly face of the occupier, and the operations against the American forces are seen as the Nation's desire to fight and resist, even as another face of the Palestinian Intifada and its suicide operations.. The difference between the Iraqis and their counterparts in the Arab world reflects the phenomenon of Iraq's separation from the Arab nation. It also reflects the failure of the Arab political and intellectual trends to understand the nuances of the Iraqi scene."

-- "A victory turns into a defeat"

Daily columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (07/17): "After completing the occupation of Iraq and the military operations, some of the American troops were supposed to return to their bases. In reality, however, U.S. Governor of Iraq, Bremer, is requesting more American troops to enable him to take control of Iraq in view of the resistance that the occupation is facing. General Tommy Franks needed 150,000 soldiers to defeat the former regime, but he will need half a million soldiers to maintain security and face up to the popular resistance. Defeating nations is easy and not very costly, but defeating the people is very difficult and quite costly.. Winning wars requires not only firepower, but also legitimacy. The war that America launched against Iraq did not lack firepower, but the war was not legitimate. It was immoral and aggressive and, hence, it was defeated even before it began."

-- "Resistance, but."

Daily columnist Hilmi Al-Asmar writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (07/17): "The Iraqi resistance to the American occupation forces is legitimate resistance, but it does not enjoy the support of all the Iraqis.. We salute the Iraqi resistance and we love to hear news of operations [against American forces]. But at the same time, we cannot label someone a 'traitor'

that does not choose this path, but rather decides to  
`go along with' the status quo."  
HALE